

STACK
ANNEX

5

028

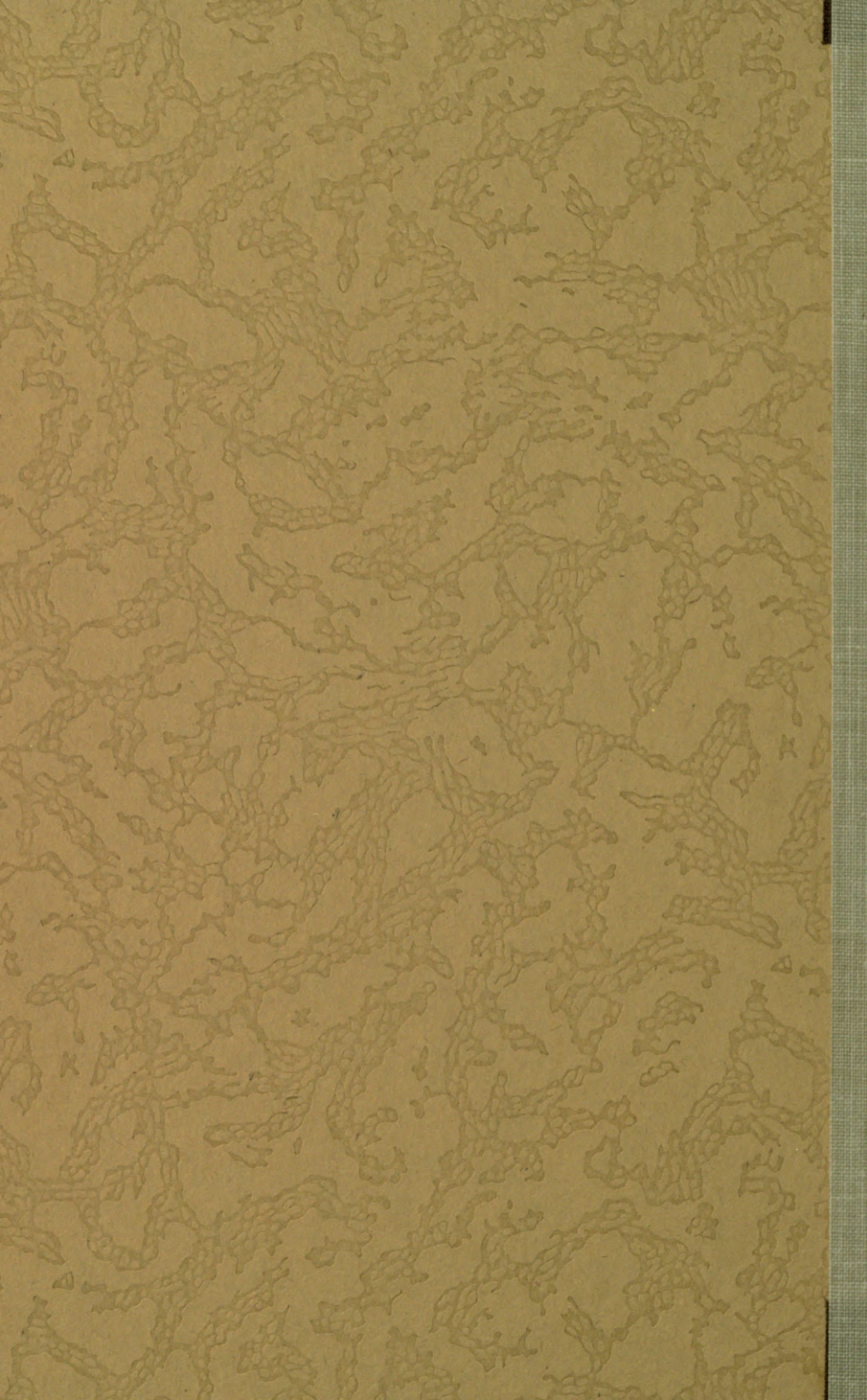
426

A

0
0
0
0
9
7
8
0
0
7



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY





ENGLISH ESSAY,

1852.

CENTRALIZATION,

ITS BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES.

A PRIZE ESSAY,
READ IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD,
JUNE 23, 1852.

BY
HANS WILLIAM SOTHEBY, B.A.,
FELLOW OF EXETER COLLEGE.

Πολλὰ μὲν ἐσθλὰ μεμιγμένα, πολλὰ δὲ λυγρά.



OXFORD,
JOHN HENRY PARKER:
AND 377, STRAND, LONDON.
M DCCC LII.

GEOMETRY

ITS PRINCIPLES AND APPLICATIONS

A PRACTICAL

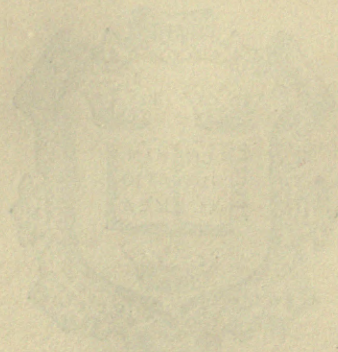
MANUAL FOR THE STUDENT

OF THE

ARTS AND SCIENCES

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



OXFORD

PRINTED BY I. SHRIMPTON.

SYNOPSIS.

INTRODUCTORY

Definition of Centralization	7
Principle by which it is to be tested	8
Division of the subject accordingly; various <i>species</i> distinguished	10
Method of enquiry	14

I. Effects of Centralization

A. <i>Administrative</i> ; on a State in its <i>Home Territory</i> , as to	
i. National greatness and security	ib.
ii. Peace and order of society	19
iii. Civil liberty and municipal institutions	21
iv. Wealth and material prosperity	24
v. Individual life and character	26
1. Of the administrative officers	27
2. Of the governed—(a.) Indirect	29
(β.) Direct influences	33
B. <i>Legislative</i> ; on <i>Colonies and Dependencies</i>	35
1. Effect on the general interests of the Empire	ib.
2. On the particular interests of the Colonies	36
Summary of Results, under ' <i>Benefits</i> ' and ' <i>Disadvan-</i> <i>tages</i>	37

II. Supplementary Remarks

Relation of Centralization to <i>Civilization</i>	38
Effects on the developement of Society	ib.
. . . on the developement of the Individual	39
Connection of Centralization with the power of Public Opinion—with the principle of the Division of La- bour—with the law of Social Progress in History	40
Necessity and difficulty of the question	42
Centralization a tendency of the human mind—Con- clusion	43

CENTRALIZATION,

ITS BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES.

CENTRALIZATION, in the most precise signification which can be assigned to it at the commencement of an enquiry, is that method of governing under which the functions of government emanate from the supreme body alone, in contradistinction to that under which they are independently exercised by certain subordinate agencies. Such at least is the meaning which both the analogy of verbal formation and the common use of language seem to indicate, in preference to any view which would extend its acceptation beyond the sphere of Political Philosophy. But so wide is its etymological sense, and so various are the applications of which, even within these limits, the word is susceptible, that the above cannot be offered as anything more than a provisional definition, subject to those specifications which farther consideration may suggest. Yet, notwithstanding this vagueness, we may expect in any word which passes into the currency of public opinion, amid much alloy, some substantial

truth. And Centralization, with its usual correlatives, so far from being an exception to this rule, expresses, plainly if not accurately, the designed or unconscious tendency of most polities, either to concentrate State government and management in the hands of a few, or to leave them as much as possible to the control of the governed.

In this, as in every instance where the merits of a system are to be discussed, some standard is required by which to estimate them. We cannot arbitrarily select from the consequences of an institution those which, from their immediate application to ourselves or to the more obvious features of society, strike us as beneficial or the reverse, or without much examination classify them under so simple a division as that of Good and Evil. We require, in the first place, to ascend to principles, and justify our praise or our censure by some test more universal and unimpeachable than that of individual, or even national experience. And secondly, care must be taken, in searching for the guidance of more trustworthy maxims than expediency can afford, not to lose sight of that expediency which the science of Politics, practical above every other, is forced to take into account, nor to apply to the Protean phenomena of human affairs, the Procrustean principles of an ideal legislation. "I cannot," says Burke^a, "stand forward, and give praise or blame to anything which relates to human actions and human concerns, on a simple view of the object, as it stands stripped of every

^a Fr. Rev., p. 10.

relation, in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction. Circumstances give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil or political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind.”

As Centralization expresses some relation between the rulers and the ruled, the two parties who constitute a social community, the application of this relation to principles and circumstances may best be judged, by first briefly stating what the idea of a social community implies as its ends and objects. For no form of government can be preferred to any other, except as it furthers the ends of Government itself; and it can only be called meritorious or objectionable so far as it promotes or retards that kind of existence which Reason and Experience have agreed in determining as the best^b. If then, we ask what is the purpose of a State, and next attempt to shew how Centralization assists or impedes the attainment of it, we may afterwards more successfully proceed to distinguish the benefits and disadvantages which it is the aim of this Essay to discover.

Society, originated by necessity to ensure the existence of its members, and continued by choice to promote their welfare, implies by this distinction, that some of its objects are indispensable, others only desirable. Under the first head range the protection

^b Περὶ πολιτείας ἀρίστης τὸν μέλλοντα ποιήσασθαι ζήτησιν ἀνάγκη διορίσασθαι πρῶτον τίς αἰρετώτατος βίος. Arist. Pol. VII. i. § 1.

of life and the protection of property : under the second, the other elements of the progressive social condition, in the order of their natural developement ; the abolition of anarchy, the confirmation of particular rights and duties, the promotion of material prosperity, and lastly, the education, in the widest sense of the term, of the individual man. From this series seem naturally to result certain elements, found in a greater or less degree in every long-established community, and forming the points by its effects on which any social system may be most justly estimated. Following out then this principle, there will come before us the influences which Centralization may be expected, or is found, to exert, on National security and greatness,—on the Peace and Order of society,—on Civil Liberty and municipal institutions,—on Wealth and material prosperity,—and finally, on Individual life and character : and we shall then be enabled most conveniently to gather up into one view the good or bad results which flow from these modes of operation, and to consider it under any other lights which the discussion may suggest.

Before, however, proceeding actually to estimate these effects, it is necessary to notice the ambiguities of which the word Centralization is susceptible, arising from its application to the different functions of government. “Government” being “a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants^c,” its powers are exerted in supplying those wants, as they

^c Burke.

have been above enumerated, by the Legislative, Judicial, and Administrative functions which every community, to whatever extent, discharges. Now the word Centralization has been applied not only to a certain state of these powers of government, but also to the authority or power of the ruling body itself from which these emanate: so that in this sense there might be a Centralized government, as well as Legislative, Judicial, and Administrative Centralization. It does not however seem desirable (except as regards one point^d, hereafter to be noticed) to give the word so wide a meaning, a meaning moreover which in most of the above instances is capable of being expressed quite as well by other words. There is in fact a wide difference between the first three, and the last of these kinds. Judicial Centralization can mean nothing more than the use of the same forms of Judicial procedure throughout a kingdom: and Legislative, the fact of all the parts of a territory being governed by the same laws. And as to what has been termed^e "Centralization of government," though this is not a case of the same laws or forms obtaining throughout a kingdom, it is something even simpler, viz., the unity of the realm itself, whether as opposed to Feudalism or imperfect Federalism. In fact every State, to deserve the name, must have a centre of some sort which gives it unity: there must

^d That of *Legislation*, as applied to Colonies. See p. 35.

^e By M. Guizot and others. See his *Origines du Gouvernement Représentatif*, Leçon III. ad fin.; also his *Civilization*, passim.

be a supreme power or at least authority, the right of which the other parts acknowledge. This then is simply a necessity of a State, and is not anything of which the merits can be called in question. It is, in fact, identical with that which is generally called by the name of nationality.

Our estimate of the benefits or disadvantages of Legislative and of Judicial Centralization can only have place in reference to an empire not geographically united, and not to one of a compact nature, as in this latter the expediency of uniform laws and uniform procedure does not seem to admit of doubt. Administrative Centralization, however, stands on a widely different footing. For the question here is not whether the whole nation shall act according to fixed rules of conduct, but whether its members, in those local matters^f of deliberation respecting which no fixed rule can be given, shall use their own discretion, or rely on the management of their rulers. For the affairs of the nation may be divided into three

^f The objects of municipal administration may perhaps be classified as follows :

Adminis- tration	{	Persons	{	<i>agentes</i> ;	{	preservation of order = <i>Magistrates</i>	{	use
				for		prevention of crime = <i>Police</i>		
				<i>patientes</i> ;		support = <i>Poor</i>		
						requiring		
	{	Things	{	coercion = { <i>Lunatics</i>	{	real		
{		{	to be made = <i>Public works</i>	{	personal.			
			to be used = <i>Public property</i>					

Cases of these being managed by the State are cases of Administrative Centralization.

classes, one of which affects it as a whole, a second its localities separately, and a third a greater or smaller number of those localities in common. An example of the first kind would be war or diplomacy: of the second, municipal finance and other similar regulations; of the third, public works of great magnitude, like canals or principal roads, which form a single branch of administration, though extending over different parts. Matters of the first class obviously, of the third probably, require to be managed by a single power: it is the second and more specially Administrative which is the truly debateable province of Centralization.

But the principle on which, if on any, the theory of Centralization is based, has a wider and deeper application than to the above-mentioned branch of the duties of a government. It is indeed the question whether, be it in Legislation or in Administration, the people are to take the initiative, or their rulers: in other words, whether the function of Governments towards their subjects is one of suggestion and direction, or one merely of correction and ratification. If it be true, as Sir James Mackintosh said, that "Constitutions are not *made*, but *grow*," the question, as regards Legislation, may be said to have received its final answer in the failure of all systems of law which have not ultimately sprung from the wants and habits of the people. But, as regards Administration, the question is by no means settled, and is probably capable of meeting with a different reply according

to the circumstances and history of every nation by whom it can be asked.

To disentangle from such circumstances the true characteristics of Centralization, especially that branch of it which it is proposed first to consider, and, divested of party feeling, to follow the ramifications of so vast a principle into the details of national and social life, is, from the nature of the case, no easy task. But our conclusions may perhaps acquire a greater degree of stability, not merely from a description of the political and moral phenomena with which Administrative Centralization has at any time coëxisted, but an endeavour, previously to any such induction, to trace, where practicable, the effects which a principle of the kind would, according to the usual laws of human nature, be likely to produce. It is only by recurring to experience that we can be preserved from vagueness in our general theories. It is only by the use of general theory that we can connect and ratify the suggestions of experience.

I. We proceed, therefore, to consider first of all the effects of Administrative Centralization on the State at home, under the heads above enumerated; secondly, on its dependencies abroad, where we shall be occupied chiefly with Legislative Centralization; and lastly to subjoin some remarks on its effects on Civilization in general, including any social or moral tendencies with which Centralization may under this point of view appear to be connected.

i. While 'Political Centralization' affords the nucleus

round which the members of the body politic may gather, and Legislation and Judicature the bonds which unite them all in the mould of a common character, Administrative Centralization may be expected to promote National greatness and security, by contributing to maintain undisturbed the advantages thus acquired. In every matter which may affect its existence, a government should be able to act with rapidity and precision, and to use the services of subordinates who are entirely under its command. And any system which unites in a single hand all the threads by which the resources of a kingdom can be controlled, possesses, over one whose measures require the consent of its independent parts, the same advantage which a well-disciplined band has over an irregular army. Such a government can second its singleness of design by every means of action which a complicated administration affords: communication with foreign nations, the disposal of the revenue and of troops, the subsidiary efforts of magistrates and police, the assistance derivable from the appropriation of municipal property or the means of defence supplied by the absolute control of public works, all are in its hand: and it may exert a power enormously disproportioned to its seeming strength by “organizing into the unity and rapidity of an individual will the natural and artificial forces of a populous nation^g.” And if we look to History,—the vast resources of men, money, and stores, which a system of delegated

^g Coleridge.

authority, partially approaching Administrative Centralization, enabled Asiatic monarchs to accumulate in masses whose effect was only frustrated by their heterogeneous composition: the power wielded by the generalissimo^h of the Roman forces, directing through his subordinate officers the operations of his most distant legions—(an office absorbed together with the rest by the politic Augustus;)—furnish the most striking confirmation, if indeed such is needed, of this view. Turning to later times, the constitution of Veniceⁱ at the beginning of the fourteenth century, shews the security which a Centralized Administration is calculated to afford against internal no less than external dangers. After the complete suppression of the popular element, its aristocracy increased the firmness and stability of purpose which naturally characterizes that form of government, by the establishment of the Council of Ten, which controlled the Legislature, strengthened the Executive, absorbed the Judicature, and finally, by the most secret and most inquisitorial^k system of police ever known, kept in check any germ of party, whether popular or monarchical, which could endanger the existing government. And the powerful effects of Administrative Centralization in France cannot be better portrayed than in the words of its great organizer^l. “I had established,” said Napoleon, “a

^h Merivale, *Roman Empire*, vol. iii. p. 455.

ⁱ See Hallam, *Middle Ages*, i. 322, &c.

^k Except Jesuitism. This too is an example of the vast power which Centralization may confer.

^l Las. Cas. vii. 97; quoted by Alison, *French Revolution*, VI. 381.

government, the most compact, carrying on its operations with the utmost rapidity, and capable of the most nervous efforts, that ever existed on earth. . . . The organization of the prefectures, their actions, and results, were alike admirable. The same impulse was given at the same moment, to more than forty millions of men: and by the aid of these centres of local activity the movement was as rapid at the extremities as at the heart of the empire."

Such is the power which Administrative Centralization incontestably confers on a government which can use it with discretion. But there is another side to the picture. A government can, by these means, it is true, concentrate its resources on a given point. But of what do these resources consist? They consist, to a great extent, of human beings, with wills, passions, and affections, the coöperation and due direction of which, makes them efficient instruments. But the will of the members of a community towards the good of that community is nothing else than Patriotism: and it is on Patriotism, therefore, the only motive power besides Religion capable of acting on large bodies of men, that the real energy of a government ultimately depends. But this sentiment, though it cannot dispense with the assistance which Political unity imparts to it, yet is more surely based on local and particular interests. Though it must look for light and warmth to the central orb of national and collective grandeur, yet it must draw its sustaining nourishment from the soil on which it grows, and

twine its roots round custom and familiar association. Men feel a stronger attachment to the institutions which they protect than to the institutions which they venerate. The latter impulse begets the patriotism which takes pride in feeling its dependence on a vast and complicated system. The former encourages that more rational, if less enthusiastic sentiment which is engendered by the knowledge of men's own connexion with the general welfare. Moreover, by the constant exercise of the apparently trifling functions of local administration, not only are the greatest possible number of individuals involved in the common prosperity of the country, but Patriotism, "a kind of devotion which is strengthened by ritual observance^m," runs in no danger of being forgotten among more indefinite, if larger, interests. The uniformity which Administrative Centralization produces, so nearly approaches mere routine management, that when the exigencies of the State demand more speedy and more energetic action, there is a difficulty in quitting the old paths and obtaining help for measures beyond the horizon of individual or local view. A Centralized nation may exhibit most perseverance in its undertakings. Yet transient intensity exhausts enduring strength; and the concentration of its efforts impairs the vitality which is the mainspring of its permanence and its progression. Thus while the Centralization of Rome perished in the dissolution of her Empire, her

^m De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. i. p. 84. (Eng. Trans.)

Gallic municipalities^a survived the general wreck of her institutions, and transmitted to modern Europe the inheritance of her spirit and her law. And Hungary^o, under the disadvantages of isolation from the rest of the continent, of a mixture of heterogeneous races, and of the frequent hostility of the power to which she is annexed, yet still retains, through a system of local self-government, the elements of Patriotism, of energy, and of national well-being.

ii. The influences of Centralization on the Peace and Order of Society are not less various than those just considered. On the one hand, a method of government which affects all the elements of the social state with the sole exception of the volitions of its individual members, must to a great degree, affect those also, by exercising a command over the instruments which the execution of their purposes requires, and by holding in its grasp all the means of which insubordination might avail itself. This fact, already exemplified from the history of Venice, is observable in every State which has adopted those watchful regulations of internal police which are the natural corollary of Administrative Centralization—since it is plainly necessary that a government should be informed whether its rules of administration are habitually observed or infringed. And these regulations, however objectionable they may sometimes appear,

^a See Sir James Stephen's Lectures on the Hist. of France. Lecture V.

^o See F. W. Newman, Lectures on Polit. Econ., p. 293.

are, it must be remembered, protective as well as coercive : and their absence as regards minor details of social life is severely felt in some of the countries where a Centralized Administration does not prevail^p. There are also instances where the peace and order of society may depend very materially on the degree to which government interferes with what are usually considered purely private matters. In countries whose physical character opposes barriers to the movement of large bodies of men, it may be found expedient by a wise discretion to restrain large manufacturers from that indiscriminate employment^q of capital which might render large bodies of workmen liable to be thrown out of employ at once, who would thus be kept together, idle and indigent, from the want of means to transport them to a new field of occupation. But while Centralization is thus beneficial to the good order of society, there are also certain opposite considerations. Though party spirit may be efficiently repressed by a system which allows to none save the collective will of the nation any outward expression, yet this very discouragement of the usual and overt means of such manifestations has a tendency to encourage those secret and forbidden associations^r, which, like certain disorders in the natural body, may embroil or undermine society, if they do not find their appropriate vent in the discussion of local interests

^p See De Tocqueville, vol. i. p. 130.

^q See Laing's *Observations on Europe*, 2nd Series, p. 158, &c.

^r De Tocqueville, i. 84,

and the excitement of local feeling. And while the multifarious resources which a Centralized Administration commands, supply some of the most efficient means for the detection and suppression of crime, yet where everything is left to the government, the people are apt to give less ready assistance, than where every member of the community is engaged on the side of justice by the feelings of duty and responsibility which local self-government implies. And it may be observed (though this was perhaps rather an abuse than a consequence of Centralization) how greatly the government nomination of municipal officers * in France contributed to the exasperation of feeling which cost Louis XVI. his crown and his life.

iii. On the rights enjoyed by men in their private and municipal capacity, the effects of a Central Administration may naturally be expected to be most distinctly traceable. No one person ever manages the affairs of another exactly in the way that person would prefer. Nor do those ends at which a government aims for the general interest, always coincide with those which the individual pursues for his own advantage. And the murmurs which may arise against the acts of the supreme power are in some danger of being disregarded by its functionaries, as resulting (in their eyes) less from enlightened views than from ignorance of what is best: so that the course pursued by the State in its collective capacity, if direct

* See Béchard, *De l'Administration Interieure de la France*, (Paris. 1851,) vol. i. p. 66.

and rapid in its aim, is too often open to the charge of unfeelingness in its means : while

“ ——— the path the human being travels,
That on which blessing comes and goes, doth follow
The river's course, the valley's playful windings,
Curves round the corn-field and the hill of vines,
Honouring the holy bounds of property,
And thus secure, though late, comes to its end[†].”

The superior intelligence of a government, an argument sometimes urged in behalf of Centralization, directs the affairs of each locality better than the inhabitants can direct them, only in those states of society when it monopolizes all political capacity. When civilization has proceeded to that point with which Administrative Centralization is generally contemporary, the ignorance of local bodies does not seem so justly presumable. And though municipal bodies suffer by the comparison of their immethodical proceedings with the precision and perseverance of a supreme government, yet that amount of energy which they actually display is in danger of being weakened, when constant interference makes them feel no more than a life-interest in local matters. It would certainly be an unwise line of policy in any government to give up all control of this nature, especially over municipal property which the occasional perverseness of municipal officers may alienate or waste[‡] : but the supineness in pecuniary misfor-

[†] Coleridge's Translation of Schiller's *Piccolomini*.

[‡] See Béchard, i. 122.

tunes which a constant reliance on state assistance begets, is a greater evil than even immethodical management and fickleness of purpose. As there is no doubt that no government ought to have it in its power to follow out whatever caprices may suggest themselves, whether to despotic or democratic tyranny, the greatest care should be taken to sustain those barriers which local institutions, by invalidating the instruments of arbitrary power, oppose to the tide of popular excitement. And Administrative Centralization by employing a corps of functionaries not accountable to the population whom they govern, involves those dangers to local liberty which, in America^{*}, the responsibility of such officers so happily avoids. Nor must it be forgotten that the accumulation of the elements of power at a single centre stores up at that centre a magazine of materials which the smouldering fires of insurrection, or the stroke of a single hand, may kindle for the destruction of freedom. It is not in ancient States alone that the seizure of the Acropolis involves the mastery of the Capital. The throne of despotic Russia has been ere now transferred from one dynasty to another without a blow on the part of its subjects: and we have seen in our own day how, under the sway of a Centralized Administration, the bravest of our neighbours may be forced to acquiesce, since powerless to interfere, in the subtly prepared and swiftly perpetrated measures,

^{*} De Tocqueville, *ubi supra*.

which have changed the most popular, to the most despotic constitution of Europe.

iv. The influence of Centralization on Material Prosperity, including under that term everything resulting from trade, commerce, and the mechanical arts, is perhaps of more difficult appreciation. The wealth of a nation may be the wealth either of the government, or of the people; either those resources which the State has at its disposal, or the accumulations and investments of individual enterprise. As regards the former, there does not seem, prior to experience, any reason for expecting that a Centralized Administration will be distinguished for extravagance, unless through insufficient information regarding the requirements of particular localities; requirements which those localities themselves, from their better knowledge, might be able more judiciously to supply. Accordingly we find that in France, where the public buildings, even for very subordinate purposes, which meet the traveller's eye, are executed on a scale unknown to ourselves, the supply, in many cases, infinitely exceeds the demand. "Roads, canals, bridges, quays, and public buildings are consequently constructed not in a commensurate proportion in extent and expense to the want to be provided for, but on a disproportionate scale, and with an excess of magnificence ridiculously in contrast with the small importance of the object, and the actual or possible wants of the community or locality. This disproportion between cost and advantage to the public, is the

great characteristic of all public works in all States in which the people have no voice in the management of their own affairs^y." And in addition to the amount spent on such objects, the salaries necessary to support a fully Centralized Administration must form a serious item in the national expenditure^z: a system which suffers by comparison with that wherein services either unbought, or rewarded by inconsiderable emoluments, attract their officers to posts of local honour and interest.

With regard to its effects on the prosperity of the governed, it is manifest that in a rude age, when the government alone has the command of the few mechanical or scientific appliances which exist, Centralization may be highly useful in prosecuting enterprises which would otherwise be totally neglected. But the case is different in a period of advanced civilization, which always places sufficient resources for most purposes at the disposal of any moderately large number of men. If we could think that a system of government supervision would have been likely to prevent a catastrophe like that which lately filled with ruin and desolation one of the busiest of our manufacturing valleys, much might be sacrificed for so inestimable an advantage. But there is too much reason to believe that amid the multiplicity of official occupations, and the numerous directions in which the overtasked activity of government functionaries has to be exerted,

^y Laing, ii. 166.

^z Béchard, i. p. 12, 13. (Sixty-three millions of francs, in France.)

matters of this description, as is actually the case in France^a, may fall into irretrievable neglect, no less than under the superintendence of local administration. Indeed municipal bodies, it has been said, 'do fewer things well, but do more things,' and if left to themselves they are especially useful in being able to attempt those improvements in the condition of the poor, or other experiments which circumstances may suggest, the demand for which is in general so tardily responded to by the supreme government. The absorption, too, of all public undertakings by the government, tends, as was the case under Napoleon's administration^b, to diminish the vigour of private enterprise, and to enrich the capital at the expense of the departments: while the contrary system, by giving wealthy individuals an interest in distant centres of action, improves the social and industrial condition of the provinces, and may encourage the latent merit which would be lost among the crowds of an overgrown metropolis.

v. But it is on individual life and character and on the general tone of moral and social feeling by which these are improved or impaired, that Administrative Centralization has the most real, if not the most obvious, influence. The system to be efficiently worked

^a M. Béchard says (i. 15) "*Nos landes abandonnées, nos cours d'eau transformés sur plusieurs points du territoire en torrents destructeurs . . . offrent une affligeant contraste avec l'état de culture avancée qu'on trouve dans la plupart des autres états de l'Europe.*"

^b See Alison, VI. 401.

implies, as we have seen, a large number of functionaries^c necessarily under the control of the central government: and we may therefore consider its effects 1. on its instruments, i. e. the officers whom it employs: 2. on the people who are thus governed.—
1. The two conditions^d which ought to be united in every officer who is not either to be made a mere machine, or on the other hand to be guided alone by individual caprice, are those of *independence* and *responsibility*: the same conditions, in fact, which Providence has appointed for the formation of moral character in mankind in general. Now the perfection of a Centralized Administration must consist, in one respect, in its complete command over the officers whom it employs: and this end is best attained by making them dependent for the tenure of the office, and responsible for their conduct in the exercise of it, to the supreme Government alone. But the checks on misgovernment, supplied in some cases by public opinion, in others by independence in the official, are under such a state of things completely neutralized. The functionaries who presided over German affairs from 1807 to 1814, not accountable to those whose affairs they managed, and holding office only at the pleasure of the foreign invader, “became the willing

^c The number of these under Louis Philippe amounted to 807,030 (Laing, ii. 185). When M. De Tocqueville wrote, the number depending on the king was 138,000: while in America only 12,000 are required, who however do not depend on the president.

^d i. e. not conditions necessary for the performance of his *work*: only those requisite to prevent its having an unfavourable effect on *himself*.

instruments in the hands of the French of the most grievous exactions, contributions, and oppressions, which without their assistance and organization could not have been carried into effect by the French commissaries^e." Evils such as these Norway avoids, by giving to each official a tenure of his post for life, and thus making him independent of the government: Great Britain (in the case of her Indian Empire), by giving the East India Company, the party most interested, the power of recalling a governor-general and other officials: and America, by the responsibility to public opinion, and resistance to the growth of an oligarchy, which is effected by the removal of all officials at intervals of four years^f. Nor in the latter country does it appear that the ignorance of the forms of official procedure has that detrimental influence on the management of affairs which some suppose it likely to induce. The frequent change of functionaries may indeed cause mismanagement under a Centralized Administration; but the stronger interest in the result which the system of local self-government naturally produces, may reasonably be expected to compensate for the want of special official training. It is found moreover, in addition to the want of moral dignity and hold on popular feeling by which bureaucratic government is characterized, that the independence and social well-being of a great portion of society is destroyed by the deferred expectations

^e Laing, ii. 191. q. v. as to the following statements.

^f *Ib.* 196, and De Tocqueville, *ubi supra*.

and compulsory leisure of those who are educated, as is so much the case in Germany and France^g, with a view to this as their ultimate profession. Thus the energy of character elicited by the feeling that continued exertions are the sole guarantee for future subsistence, is supplanted by a habit of mind which diffuses indeed, from the education demanded in all who aspire to such posts, a humanizing influence throughout society, but tending, by a contracted routine of business and a limited though secure maintenance, eventually to extinguish many capacities which might otherwise have been exercised in more various and useful directions.

2 *α*. The effects which this system produces (indirectly perhaps, but most surely) on the people in general, as distinct from that section which undertakes their management, seem, in the first place, to be, a diminution of energetic action, even in matters not included in the sphere of administration, through the encroachments of government on this debateable ground. In a state of society imperfectly civilized, and possessed of little information, Centralization, as it is more urgently required to satisfy wants inadequately met by the deficient state of knowledge,—so it has its ill effects counteracted by the undisci-

^g For the proof of this as regards *France*, see the Report on the Budget of 1850, quoted by Béchard, i. 13; as regards *Germany*, see Laing, ii. 198. The hopes of an official life are a prominent feature in many German novels. See J. P. Richter's *Quintus Fixlein*. De Tocqueville has some good remarks, vol. iv. part 1, on the "venal humour" produced by place-hunting.

plined energies and untrained habits of the people : but in an advanced state of civilized existence, where habit and custom are far more powerful, it depresses and impairs both public spirit and private enterprise. Thus it was the policy of Trajan^h, admirable as was his administration in many respects, to diminish, through a fear of encouraging faction, that attention to public affairs which the local governments of the provinces were sometimes disposed to shew : a method of government which, by teaching the people to look to the imperial power on every occasion, whether for pecuniary assistance for public works, or for advice concerning municipal regulations, left them no principle of activity in themselves, and promoted a habit of helplessness which under less humane and enlightened superiors led to much evil and neglectⁱ. And Self-respect, which has been thought capable of being derived from the actual share which a democratic constitution may give every citizen in the supreme government, is more surely grounded on the constant and responsible discharge of functions by which the interests of neighbours and friends are affected and involved. Thus in those countries where Liberty is rather as it were brought within the reach of the people to enjoy than held up at a distance for them to venerate, public spirit is promoted, and the forma-

^h See Dr. Arnold's *Life of Trajan*, *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, X. 656.

ⁱ So De Tocqueville notices that in the southern states of America there is more centralization and less public spirit.

tion of character assisted by the management of local interests. And the stir and commotion which these occasion, dangerous as they may appear to foreign observers, yet seem to a fairer judgment to quicken the pulses and invigorate the blood of society. When Liberty comes down among the children of men, the waters are indeed troubled; but it is by the visit of an angel.

Nor is the effect of the local self-government which Centralization excludes, less apparent on public morality. In matters of this nature which it is possible for Law and Police to reach, it may be more reasonably expected that the concern of the chief inhabitants for the good order and credit of their locality will operate efficiently, than the less interested though more numerous functionaries of the State administration^k; while the tendency of Centralization to go more into detail than the nature of things allows, may secretly encourage^l, though it outwardly prohibits those practices, to check which local opinion and administration have always been found so powerful^m. And the companies for the promotion of *moral* objects not within the province of government, so remarkable a feature in modern civilization, seem liable to discouragement from the same cause which, under the suspicious rulers of the later Roman empire, re-

^k See Béchard, i. 192.

^l M. Béchard farther charges the functionaries in France with corruption, (*ubi supra.*)

^m See F. W. Newman, p. 290.

pressed associations for purposes as innocent and more material.

Administrative Centralization may also indirectly affect social character and sentiments through Art and Literature: but only, it is true, in a secondary and mediate manner. We have already seen how the education necessary to qualify individuals for office may spread some intellectual light through a country. But Centralization by implying a central seat of government implies also a metropolis; and it is to a metropolis that all who seek fame or emolument by the above pursuits are induced to resort. If art is fostered by the coöperative criticism which any assemblage of persons in towns can furnish, much more must it be improved by the distinguished members of all professions whom a metropolis attracts into its circle. Taste may be cultivated by national collections. Industry may find its material in national libraries. Genius may be stimulated by the rewards or gratified by the fame which collected wealth and appreciation have power to bestow ⁿ. But it must be remembered that while one spot is thus enriched by the talent of a country, the rest are proportionably impoverished. Metropolitan excellence can only be attained at the cost of provincial exhaustion ^o. The question, in fact, is, whether a nation shall shine with

ⁿ See *De la Centralisation, par Timon* (M. de Cormenin), *passim*. His contemptuous comparisons of provincial towns with Paris are a strong argument against the principle he eulogizes.

^o See Lord Cockburn's *Life of Jeffrey*.

concentrated brilliancy in science, letters, and art, or spread a diffused and equable mediocrity over a more extended circle. While the former tendency (since no Homers wander now) seems more likely to elicit those mighty spirits, “full-welling fountain-heads of change,” who have ever formed some of the chiefest sources of a nation’s pride, the latter seems calculated to humanize a greater number, and afford those benefits to the many, which the cares of an anxious subsistence too frequently exclude. And the same observation may be made as regards the influences of Journalism^p. The greater number of centres of political information and activity which local self-government implies, require more numerous newspapers, not all however capable of commanding the talent lavished on those which represent the opinions of a great legislative and administrative focus.

Unfavourable as is the conclusion to which these considerations may seem to point as regards Centralization, our estimate must be considerably modified by remembering that the improved state of civilization with which it generally coëxists, presents such facilities of locomotion and transport as may neutralize almost all the injurious consequences (if we think them injurious) which the sacrifice of the many to the few might in a ruder age produce.

β. But in addition to the above indirect effects, Centralization may also more immediately influence

^p See on this point De Tocqueville, iii. 130, &c.

social character and sentiments, by means of *Education*. Education (or rather Instruction) is either general, professional, or Religious. Whether the direction of these by government is beneficial or the reverse, depends on the degree of culture prevailing in a country, and on the disposition of persons to make use of opportunities. But, since some education or other is the only means of raising man much above the animals, at least the rudimentary elements should be required of all. But this is a different question from the one, whether the State should have a monopoly of education: a question which may be answered at once in the negative: though the monopoly of education is what Centralization naturally leads to. "Give me Education for a hundred years," said Leibnitz, "and I will change the world;" and to a ruler who by thus directing the opinions of his subjects, moulds them freely to his will, the expression "shepherd of the people," would be not metaphorically, but literally applicable. As regards the professional education, towards the adoption of which some European governments seem tending, it may be the exercise of a wise discretion, so to regulate the number of those instructed for particular employments, as to diminish the misery which the competition in over-crowded trades and professions so fatally engenders among ourselves. And Religious Education, which may suffer the same fate as Secular under a centralized regime, can only be fitly bestowed under the policy of tolerance to all, and encouragement to one,

of the modes of teaching, which even then must independently fulfil its function of spiritual culture.

B. In proceeding to speak of the effects of Centralization on a Colonial Empire^a, Legislation must chiefly be taken into account. This, though it seems to do so, does not in reality stand on the ground of unity of legislation at home. There is a great difference between abolishing the anomalous laws of local communities, and disallowing the right of a delegated legislative power to distant colonies. For these, a Central Administration, where it is possible, which is not often the case, is of course most injurious: and not less hurtful is that phase of it which is generally possible, the nomination of local officers by the government at home.

1. To the interests of the empire at large, more dangers seem likely to arise from the disaffection caused by the hindrances inseparable from Centralized Legislation, than from the supposed democratic tendencies of a fully delegated power. And though, doubtless, the inexperience of youthful communities may in many cases abuse this trust, yet the reservation of a right to annul proceedings of the colonial rulers found generally detrimental, would answer every purpose at which a Centralizing Legislation aims. The Romans solved the problem of fusing conquered States into one body by leaving, where compatible with allegiance, institutions and laws to the conquered: nor

^a On this point much information has been derived from Wakefield, *Art of Colonization*, xxxvith and following Letter.

was it but by an infringement of this necessary principle that America was finally lost to England.

2. The interests of colonies in particular, as distinct from the empire in general, may be affected, *a.* by the nature of the functionaries who administer them—and these functionaries may be either at home or abroad. The former will be liable to the charges of ignorance certainly, of neglect probably, as well as of becoming incapacitated for legislation, though it is their business, by routine habits. The defect of those abroad will be, that they are attached to an external centre, and therefore detached from a common interest with those whom they govern; just as the English clergy before the Reformation, belonging to *their* centralized system, formed radii intersecting the regality and nationality of England. *b.* Distance, and therefore slow communication with the home government, increases to an almost incredible^{*} extent the correspondence necessitated by administration; nullifies permissions when at length received; and sometimes produces fatal results to trade and navigation by the hindrance of useful public works[†].

Such are some of the effects of Legislative and even partial Administrative Centralization, on colonies. If a State's duty is, not to devour its own children, but rather, Deucalion-like, to turn the bare stones of the

^{*} In the single year 1846, the Colonial Office of Paris received from Algeria no less than 28,000 despatches. Wakefield, p. 251.

[†] Borrer, quoted by Wakefield, who mentions the loss of ships for want of a light-house which was to have been built in New Zealand.

wilderness into centres of vitality and action, a system must be modified, which produces opportunities for oppression in the governing, disaffection in the governed, and seriously affects the economical welfare of distant dependencies.

It remains now, previous to the supplementary remarks, to sum up, under the two heads required by the Essay, the conclusions at which we have arrived.

The *Benefits* then, of Centralization are, that it assists the greatness and security of a country through the close coherence of its parts, and the defensive or offensive efficiency of its organization; that it is favourable to the order of society by keeping in check dangerous elements or introducing economical regulations in circumstances where dangerous elements may be developed: that it may help municipal liberty by assistance and consolidation during the times when society most requires them; that it may increase material prosperity, by occasionally performing works beyond the means of local bodies; that it may benefit individual character and manners by those humanizing influences which the results of collective arts, sciences, and branches of literature in a metropolis will generally be found to produce.

The *Disadvantages* of Centralization are, that it dries up the springs of Patriotism in particular localities, and while rendering a nation capable of great efforts, impairs the powers which may renew them: that it fosters conspiracy while repressing faction, and loses the assistance of society in the coercion of crime:

that it encroaches on individual and social freedom while it stifles the energy of individual and social enterprise; that it injures wealth by extravagance as regards public, and neglect as regards private property: and finally, that it encourages in its functionaries a spirit of servile dependence, and an unsympathising temper towards the governed, while in the governed it produces that moral attenuation, which, like its physical counterpart in other natures, in man too marks the commencement of degeneracy and decay;—

“Sponte sua quæ se tollunt in luminis oras,
 Infecunda quidem, sed læta et fortia surgunt;

 Nunc altæ frondes et rami Matris opacant,
 Crescentique adimunt fetus, uruntque ferentem.”

II. Wider and less definite results, not so susceptible of particular proof, yet not the less certainly connected with the subject, may here perhaps most fitly be suggested. *Civilization*, above all—or the co-ordinate developement of Society and the Individual,—will not be uninfluenced by so potent a tendency as that which we have been considering. If, as seems true, part of the developement of Society results from the worthy occupation of the governing part of it, any system will be unfavourable to it which wastes time, better bestowed on large questions, in the petty details of local administration. And, though the concentration of intellect may promote social progress, yet *moral* sympathies require local unions, incapable

as they are of adequate growth among the closely packed masses which the concentration of intellect, as of wealth, implies. And it is by coöperation of the higher and middle classes for the benefit of the lower in *local* institutions of Education or Charity, that moral sympathies between all three are most likely, if at all, to be developed, and the barrier broken down which separates the Two Nations, as Plato calls them, of the Rich and the Poor.

To the developement of the Individual any system is injurious which diminishes the number of opportunities for the conscientious exercise of his single judgment; just as in Religion an externally imposed system of rules to meet all contingencies hinders the growth of Conscience by the minute details of Casuistry. Local business, even if not successfully conducted, enlarges the circle of ideas, and in some degree counteracts the narrowing tendencies of merely industrial pursuits. Civilization, too, viewed in its modern aspect, seems to repeat one of its ancient characteristics,—the predominance of the State over its members,—now represented by the hold which Public Opinion has over the Individual. For though now, destined for Eternity, he is not, as once he was, held of inferior dignity to Collective Man: yet he may have to bow to a more arbitrary power—the opinions, feelings, and tastes which a majority will always impose, if possible with the stringency of law, on the minority of society. For this is the form which the composite monster of which Plato speaks, assumes

at the present day. It might well be, among those to whom the Future was a prospect on which "shadows, clouds, and darkness" were resting, that the indefeasible personality of the citizen might be required to yield to the united majesty of the community, and that men should conceive then, as they have done since, of a power transcending in its final cause and formal beauty the petty interests of its material constituents, and combining the variety and force of the multitude with the unity and coherence of the individual. There may be indeed something wonderfully attractive to the philosophic Statesman in all that such a centralized system involves; the descending hierarchy of officers, the multiplicity of functions, and the graduated subordination of parts under the single ruler, that sits at the helm of affairs and ramifies into the minutest details of administration his secret and imperial influence;

"totamque, infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet."

And to the fascinations of such a Political Pantheism we might be right to yield, were human forms of polity not liable to human accidents, and were the practical execution of a system always commensurate with its ideal perfection. To minds enamoured of system for system's sake, to whom simplicity of design and symmetry of adaptation are recommendations which the actual vices of the machine in action do not always outweigh, Centralization may appear—as it has ap-

peared to modern France, strikingly characterized as she is by these logical predilections—the very consummation of political harmony and grandeur. But when we consider how the system may work; and when we see, how the ever-progressing principle of the Division of Labour, while it views government as a mere profession, thus supplying Centralization with its theory,—tends to carry it into practice by developing each man's powers in some one limited channel,—we recognise the necessity of surrounding individual completeness and independence of character with the firmest bulwarks; and, slow to admit a system of an opposite tendency, we shall agree with Aristotle, that *λίαν ἐνοῦν ζητεῖν τὴν πολιτείαν, οὐκ ἐστὶν ἄμεινον*.

Centralization, in the still wider sense in which it is brought before us by History, appears as the alternate reconstruction of previously disrupted societies. The human race, projected from the formative will of its Creator, is first the *one* family, is then dispersed into communities; each of which viewed in its primary and ideal character, presents in its subordinate yet independent parts, an analogon of man's physical constitution, where the functional activity of diversely harmonious organs ensures under the superintendence of the central nervous energy, the continuance of Life. Declining from this their original state, societies are disintegrated into anarchy, and recombined into still more numerous unities, by the amalgamations of Conquest, of Colonization, of Federation, of Monarchy; or present, finally, that narrower and intenser applica-

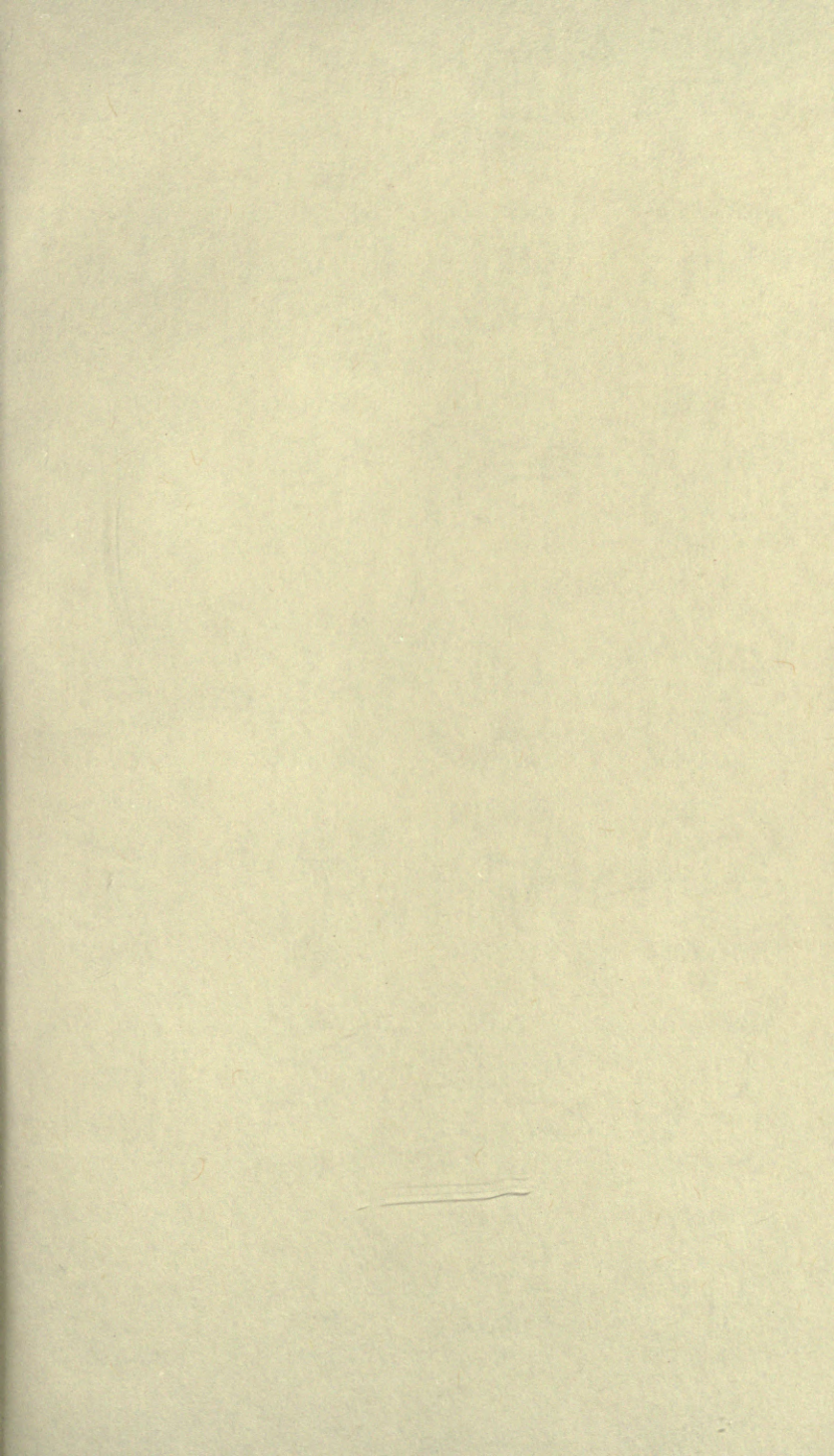
tion of the principle which is the bane of Administrative Centralization. It is at this stage that the Politician must encounter it: it is at this stage that it becomes most formidable. As the Philosopher tries to grasp his 'fundamental antitheses,' so the Statesman must reconcile *his*; and they are, especially in this instance, problems of a more pressing character. For while Philosophical doubt, though it may vex the heart and weary the brain, seldom conducts to the Euripus,—the problems of Politics are always propounded by a Sphinx, and the prosperity, if not the fate of a nation, is in the hand of the Œdipus who can answer them.

To attempt the framing of such solutions: to combine new wants and old arrangements: to make political unity compatible with local independence: to steer between the rebellious prejudices which shatter all improvement, and the whirlpool which draws all improvement to itself: in a word, to reconcile the centripetal and centrifugal forces of society, and imitate in states the harmony of the universe, this is the task of the Statesman and the Legislator, nor does it seem that it can be efficiently performed without a due sense of the evils of Centralization.

But if from a sight of these evils we should be led unreservedly to condemn it,—we must remember that its principle, though precluded by the inevitable weaknesses of our nature from innocuous developement, may yet be one of those tendencies of the human mind which Philosophy no less than History acknow-

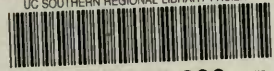
ledges, and which point to some state of unseen perfectibility, where the individual will shall be independent of, yet harmonious with, the Supreme, and neither absorption on the one hand, nor discordance on the other, shall mar the symmetry of their co-öperation. And if the complexities and shortcomings around us seem to remove from mortal ken so glorious a consummation, yet we, too, may say with Plato[†],
'Αλλ' ἐν Οὐρανῷ ἴσως παράδειγμα ἀνακείται τῷ
βουλομένῳ ὁρᾶν καὶ ὁρῶντι ἑαυτὸν κατοικίζειν.

[†] Republic, b. ix. ad fin.





UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 097 800 7

